Duration of posting of combatants at the front

†745. SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the officers of Army had recommended the posting of combatants on front for seven years, instead of 17 years; if so, what are the details of the report;

(b) the action taken by Government so far in that regard;

(c) when was the report regarding the said recommendation received by Government; and

(d) the reasons for delay in taking action in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (d) A Group of Ministers (GoM) on 'Reforming the National Security System' appointed in the wake of Kargil Review Committee Report, discussed the issue of younger age profile and lateral transfer of army personnel to other organizations. While admitting that this is a complex matter, the GoM recommended a Committee of officers under the Chairmanship of the Cabinet Secretary to look into the terms of engagement of soldiers, lateral entry into other organizations and resettlement policies. The matter is under consideration of the Government and a Working Group comprising officers from the Army, Para Military Forces and Ministry of Home Affairs has been constituted to go into the details of the issue.

Private participation in Defence production

746. SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that private participation in Defence production is very poor; if so, the reasons therefor; and

(b) the details of steps taken by Government to promote private participation in Defence production?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) and (b) Indian private sector industry has traditionally been associated with Defence Public Sector Undertakings

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

and Ordnance Factories in meeting their requirements of raw materials, components, sub-assemblies, spares etc. for production of defence equipment. The defence industry sector was opened for Indian private sector participation in May 2001. So far, 29 Letters of Intent/Industrial Licences have been issued to various private sector companies for production of a wide range of defence items.

Erosion in combat squadrons of IAF

747. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:
DR. PRABHA THAKUR:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the strength of IAF has eroded significantly to only 28 combat squadrons, as against the sancitoned strength of 39 squadrons;

(b) whether it is also a fact that only one-third of the upgraded MIG-21 Bisons are operating and two squadrons of MIG-29 have been grounded; if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether it is a fact that HAL has not been able to meet the qualitative and quantitative requirements of IAF, in supplying spare and assembled aircrafts; and

(d) if so, what steps are being taken to increase the combat preparedness of IAF?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) and (b) No, Sir.

(c) HAL has been providing adequate product support. However, on few occasions, the quantitative requirements of IAF have not been met by HAL.

(d) Quality control measures, joint consultative mechanism between IAF and HAL and warranty against defective components are some of the steps taken to meet the qualitative and quantitative requirements of IAF. Further, Government constantly review the security environment and accordingly decide to induct appropriate equipment and to make other arrangements for adequate combat preparedness.